



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: November 21, 2022

Time: 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Type: Teleconference

Participants: Lindsay Thompson (Co-Chair), Chris Benzing (Co-Chair), Greg Padgham, John Hartline, Bill Valentine, M.Q. Riding, Debbie Bowden, Susan O'Neill, Janice Palmer, Don Mulrine, Kelly Dudeck, Mike Thielke, Kimberly Kratovil, Matt Teffeau, Scott Warner, MAEF, Diana-Lynne Hsu, Cassandra Vanhooser, Alice Settle-Raskin, Charlotte Davis, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D'Arcy.

Legislative Committee Co-Chair Chris Benzing welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 12:09pm. Committee Members introduced themselves. The Committee reviewed the minutes from the July 21, 2022 minutes. The minutes were accepted by consensus.

The Committee discussed the recent elections and upcoming transitions as well as 2023 legislative session updates and the general layout of the Committee meetings. The Committee discussed legislative events and it was agreed to host the Welcome Breakfast at the Maryland Inn on Friday, January 13, 2023. RMC staff will look into reserving a block of rooms for that event since it starts at 7:30am. The Committee discussed Rural Maryland Day that will be held on February 9, 2023 and decided to hold it via Zoom teleconference with two small teams in person to meet with specific legislators. The Committee discussed the Maryland Day event on Lawyers' Mall to be held on Friday, March 24, 2023 and that RMC is currently looking for vendors to participate.

The Committee discussed the Rural Communities Improvement Act of 2023. Ms. Charlotte Davis sent it to the legislators and will follow up to see if it was submitted. Changes included removing the sunset (currently 2030) and changing the *may* to a *shall* regarding the appropriation in the budget bill for the fund; updating the Regional Council language that removes the multi-county efforts and expand entrepreneurship to include agribusiness development, cooperative development, and workforce development; change in safety valve funding to reflect increase funding for the Council and its operations; reallocation of funding concurrence of the RMC Executive Committee (replaced RMC Executive Board). The Committee discussed removing the multi-county clause which would not impact the remaining three rural counties as they could still seek recognition as a rural regional council and be eligible for funding in the future.

The Committee discussed the recent roundtables looking at the non-emergency medical transportation. Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that there were approximately 50 participants at each hybrid meeting and consisted of transit staff, health officers, health providers, human services transportation providers and insurers. The recommendations include increase coordination among the different programs, re-establish and codify of State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation; enhance current funding that is available at the local operated transit system and the senior rides and creating a rural pilot program through the Maryland Department of Health. RMC staff are currently working on legislation and will share at an upcoming meeting. Mr. John Hartline recognized Sara Seitz, Director, State Office of Rural Health for chairing the Health Committee and providing expertise during the planning and implementation of the roundtables.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the results of the 2022 Rural Issues Survey. The main takeaway was generated from the top 5 responses that include creating and retaining jobs; services for seniors; affordable housing, broadband, and keeping and making farming profitable. Ms. Charlotte

Davis reported that crime and renewable energy were two other issues. Ms. Davis stated that the survey information will feed into the legislative priorities documents and that staff are currently working on it. Additionally, Ms. Davis stated that the Council plans to offer a more robust survey next year and the Council is currently working with the University of Maryland Institute for Governmental Service and Research.

Ms. Charlotte Davis shared that the 2023 calendar was included in the packet and the Committee discussed the meeting schedule, which will be held every other week and they will be called every week when appropriate.

Co-Chair Chris Benzing asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Steve McHenry made the motion, Mr. Don Mulrine seconded it. The meeting ended at 1:04pm.